mega projects in the public and private sectors. It is also proposed to set up a Power Trading Corporation for purchase of power from the mega projects and sell the same to identified State Electricity Boards. Five Task Forces have been set up to monitor Hydel, Thermal, Systems, Reform & Restructuring and Private Sector Projects. The objective of the Task Forces is to ensure timely completion of the projects and remove bottlenecks.

(b) The estimate of commercial losses of State Electricity Boards for the years 1997-98 and 1998-99 would be available after finalisation of their annual accounts for these years.

(c) and (d) The setting up of Regulatory Commissions would help in rationalising tariffs and also provide for transparent subsidies, wherever required.

The State Governments have the option of providing subsidies over and above those recommended by the regulatory Commissions. Such subsidies could cover concessional power to agriculture and to weaker sections on the condition that the State Governments compensate the State Electricity Boards by providing adequate budgetary support. When tariffs are rationalised and budgetary supports provided, the State Electricity Boards and power utilities will improve their financial health and their capacity to invest in generation, transmission and distribution projects.

Clearance of Power Projects in Assam

257. SHRIMATI BASANTI SARMA: Will the Minister of POWER be pleased to state:

(a) the details of proposals pending with Government for sanction and clearance for setting up of power projects in the state of Assam;

(b) at what stages those projects have been pending, project-wise; and

(c) the steps taken to expedite those projects?

THE MINISTER OF POWER (SHRI P.R. KUMARAMANGALAM): (a) to (c) The DPR for the Lakwa WHR TPP Stage-I of Assam State Electricity Board (25 MW capacity) was received in Central Electricity Authority on 10.8.1998 and is under process for award of techno-economic clearance.

Rajasthan's claim in power projects of Punjab

258. SHRI ONKAR SINGH LAKHAWAT: Will the Minister of POWER be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that as per the agreement dated 10th May, 1984 between the Chief Ministers of Rajasthan, Haryana, the then Hon'ble Punjab Governor and the Central Government was to refer the claims of Rajasthan in Power Projects of Punjab to the Supreme court;

(b) whether the matter has been referred to the Supreme Court; and

(c) if not, by when it is likely to be referred?

THE MINISTER OF POWER (SHRI P.R. KUMARAMANGALAM): (a) to (c) An Agreement was drawn up on 10.5.1984 amongst Punjab, Haryana, Rajasthan and the Central Government for making a reference to the Supreme Court on the question of entitlement of Haryana and Rajasthan to a share in the power generated in the Anandpur Sahib Hydel Project, Mukerian Hydel Project, Thein Dam Project, Upper Bari Doab Canal (UBDC) Stage-II and Shahpur Kandi Hydel Scheme; and, in the case of there being such an entitlement, to determine the share of each State. Thereafter, it was decided to defer making a reference to Supreme Court until all avenues of settlement are explored. The subject was discussed in meetings held by the Ministry of Water Resources. However, no consensus could be reached.

The subject was also discussed in the meeting of Northern Zonal Council held at Srinagar on 20th October, 1997, when it was decided that a separate Conference of the Chief Ministers and concerned Ministers of the States of the Northern Zone could be convened at which Union Ministers and senior officers from the Ministries of Water Resources and Power could also be present. This conference could undertake indepth study of all the relevant issues and factors relating to sharing of water and power and evolve consensus on mutually agreeable parameters.

Accordingly, an official level meeting was convened by the Ministry of Power at Chandigarh on 16.9.98 which was attended among others by the representative of Punjab, Haryana, Rajasthan as well as Himachal Pradesh. However, because of the rigid and divergent stand taken by the concerned State Governments, no consensus could be possible. A separate conference of Chief Ministers is now contemplated to be held shortly. Any attempt would be made to resolving the issues in consultation with the concerned State Governments.

Surplus Power in the Eastern Region

259. SHRI PARMESHWAR KUMAR AGARWALLA: Will the Minister of POWER be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Eastern region is considered to be a surplus region in power generation;

(b) if so, the reasons for the surplus generation in this region;

(c) what is the total surplus; and

(d) the steps being taken or proposed to be taken to offset the surplus?

THE MINISTER OF POWER (SHRI P.R. KUMARAMANGALAM): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The surplus power availability in Eastern Region is due to inadequate growth in load and sub-transmission and distribution network as compared to growth in generation capacity.

(c) The estimated surplus of power in the peak and off-peak hours in the Eastern Region is of the order of 1500 MW and 3500 MW respectively.

(d) The following steps have been taken to offset the surplus in the Eastern Region:

(i) Institutional arrangements have been made to transfer power from Eastern Region to the State/UTs in the Southern, Western, Northern and North-Eastern regions to the extent possible.

(ii) Some inter-regional links are under construction for enhancing export of power.

(iii) Steps are also being taken for augmentation of transmission system within the region for load development as well as to maximise export of power from Eastern region to the other regions.

Cutting off Power Supply by NTPC to West Bengal and Bihar

260. SHRI GURUDAS DAS GUPTA:
SHRI GAYA SINGH:

Will the Minister of POWER be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the National Thermal Power Corporation (NTPC) has cut off power supply to West Bengal and Bihar due to non-payment of dues;

(b) if so, the details of the dues owed to NTPC by different States; and

(c) the reasons for stopping the power supply only to these two states?

THE MINISTER OF POWER (SHRI P.R. KUMARAMANGALAM): (a) National Thermal Power Corporation (NTPC) resorted to regulation of power supply to West Bengal from Farakka Super Thermal Power Station on the